

METHODS

Proposed for

REGULATING

THE

P O O R,

Supporting of

Some and Employing Others,
according to their several
Capacities.

Townes

K By Sir W. F. [Sir William Fawcett].

*See his plan for an intended hospital for
lunatick, in the Edinburgh Review, vol. XX. p. 107.*



D U B L I N:

Printed by and for J. H Y D E, Bookseller in Dame's-Street,

1725.

Townes

METHOD
REGULATING

THE

POOR

Supporting of

Some and Improving of
according to their
capacities.

By an Act of Parliament

in the first year of the reign of King George the Third

Printed by and for J. DODD, at the New Bath in Pall Mall

1763

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P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following Proposal, observing our Parliament did not think fit to pass a Poor-Bill the last Sessions, published it about February 1724. conceiving, if the Nobility and Gentry would heartily concur in the Methods laid down; by that means (and the good Laws in force) the End of a Poor-Bill might in great measure be answered, and at small Expence.

Since which the Parishes in Dublin have Badged most of their Poor; and it is reported, their House of Correction will be removed and joined to the Poor-House, and both put under such new Regulations as will soon answer the Methods proposed; especially if the Parishes will but compleat the Badging all the Poor they own to belong to their respective Parishes, and who have resided therein a sufficient Time, obliging the late Comers to retire whence they came.

This being effectually done, and a Resolution taken to make frequent Reviews of all so Badged, there is no manner of doubt but such Badged-Poor will find a sufficient Support from the Alms of the Inhabitants of this opulent City, and from the Members of others who daily resort there, when there are none others but such Badged-Poor for them to give Alms to.

At present, many of the Parish-Poor being Unbadged, the strange Beggars are on an equal foot with them, and the Beadles are not able to distinguish who are, or are not to be allowed Parish-Poor: Therefore the speedy compleat Badging is the more necessary; which once finished, the Vagabonds and strange Beggars will find themselves obliged to retire, or be committed to the House of Correction, where proper Work will be prepared for them.

The Vagabond-Youths of both Sexes (now wandering about the Streets) will also be taken up, and set to Work proper for them;

P R E F A C E.

them; this being designed by the new Regulation, as is reported. Besides, thereby room will be made in the Poor-House for the taking in of more of the Orphan-Poor Children from the Parishes.

It is reported, other Cities and Towns, as also many Country Parishes, have begun to Badge their Poor; but unless it be done effectually, and frequent Reviews taken, Vagabonds and Cheats will find means to buy or hire Badges, or get Counterfeits: And it is to be suspected the Badged-Poor will shelter and connive with strange Beggars if not put under some Penalty when discovered.

It is computed, that above a quarter part of all such as now go under the denomination of Beggars throughout the Kingdom, are Strolling-Vagabonds and Cheats in disguise, and able to find a Living another way, if compelled to it.

If the effectual Badging and frequent Reviewing all real Parish-Poor, will be a means to discover all such Cheats, &c. and cause them to vanish; by which the Parish-Poor can be much easier supported by the Inhabitants.

Certainly this alone will be sufficient to recompence the Trouble and Expence, when the Parliament shall find such a Progress made, by the effectual Badging, that the real Poor of every Parish may be known, and are likely to be supported by Alms, and some Labour, by the charitable Disposition of the Inhabitants, and the Country much eased of the Strolling-Vagabonds and Cheats.

It is not to be doubted but they will think fit to give a helping Hand to the Work, by directing proper Methods for the finishing Work-Houses and Houses of Correction with all speed, and the supplying them with Necessaries and Stock for setting to work all those Vagabonds, and others rejected by the Parishes; also such Youth as their Parents are not able to maintain, nor the Gentry nor Farmers willing to take as Apprentices.

Which Assistance, if the PARLIAMENT shall think fit to grant, it will (by the Blessing of GOD) effectually answer the End of the annexed Proposal; and thereby (in great measure) free the Kingdom of a Grievance, which otherwise will insensibly increase upon us.



M E T H O D S

Proposed for

Regulating the Poor, &c.



I H O P E every Body will agree in this, that it is high time that the Poor should be taken into our Consideration, and that we ought in Charity to them, as well as in Kindness to our selves, set about that Work now, which if delay'd, may bring us under a Necessity of doing it at a far greater Expence and Trouble.

As it did our Neighbours in *England*; who by neglecting to make timely Regulations and Provisions, had their Poor so insensibly increased, as laid them under an absolute Necessity (tho' at a vast Expence) to endeavour to put a stop to the Grievance; and still we find his Majesty is recommending the Case of the Poor, to the Consideration of Parliament, as a Matter of no small Concernment.

Nothing is more easy and common than complaining and finding fault; yet nothing is more difficult, than to prevail upon one of these Gentlemen, to lay down Methods for Redress, and to put their helping Hand to the Work, tho' it is in their power, every Gentleman is for shifting Trouble from his own Door; but I conceive no Man is too great for this Work.

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It is very usual to hear People cry out, why are not the Beggars taken up and sent to Work-Houses, &c. little considering how few of such Beggars are able to do any Work; and such as are, what sorry Work they are capable of, and how that proper Places must be first provided for their Reception and Support, until they can earn their Bread, with a Stock for Employment, and a Master to Instruct.

That this Preparation must first be made before the Poor can be taken up to subsist, and be set to work.

What I therefore propose is this; That such as are incapable, shall be supported in, and by their respective Parishes, as I suppose the Blind, Lame, and such as labour under visible Maladies, Women loaden with small Children belonging to the Parishes.

And the Method I propose for supporting these is, that such incapable Poor, be forthwith badged in every Parish throughout the Kingdom, (where it is not already done) and only such as have resided 18 Months in the Parishes, some Objects (tho' not exactly so qualified, excepted) left to the Discretion of the Minister and Churchwardens to badge, or not, as they know the Parish can admit it. The poor Women, tho' they have Children, are many of them capable of spinning or some other Work, provided one of the Children be able to tend the rest. These sort of Women ought to have some Distinction on their Badge whereby to be known, to induce the Neighbours to assist such poor Women with Work, and Support, until publick Work be provided.

And the small Children of such Women, to have some Relief from the Minister and Churchwardens, out of the Offerings and Collections in Church, and Provision made by the Parishes for infant Poor.

And in order to the regular badging of such Parish-Poor, I propose the following Method to be observed.

That a Vestry be called to meet and agree upon a needful Number of Badges to be prepared, and a Day fixed to have them ready, and put upon such of their Parish-Poor, as shall be found Objects qualified: That the Minister

give

give publick notice, in Church the next Lord's-day, of the time agreed upon, to examine into the Conditions of all such Poor as reside in the Parish on that day. Requiring all then to appear in the Churchyard, in order to receive Badges if they have been resident in the Parish 18 Months, and are disabled from working. And that all other strange Beggars may take notice, and depart to their former Places of Abode; for that they are not to expect any support there, and in case they are not minded to take that Warning, such as shall be found after that day, will be liable to be treated as sturdy Beggars, Vagabonds, and Strollers; or to this Effect.

The Badges for Cities and Towns, to be of some Mettle. Those for the Country-Parishes of Cloth, either blue, red, green, or some other Colour. The Shapes to be of the first Letter of the Name of the Parish, and large, to be fixed upon the right Arm of their Cloathes, a Charge to be given such badg'd Poor, not to exceed the Limits of the Parish, on Penalty, if they shall be found begging thereout, to have their Badge taken from them.

Where a Parish is small, and has many Poor in it, and the adjoining large, and has but a few in comparison; as it may be the Case where it so happens, it ought to be allow'd by consent, the Poor of each may have Liberty to beg in both Parishes, and have the two Letters for each Badge; this Method will soon make the Parish-Poor so well known, that for their own sakes they will discover if any Counterfeits come among them.

The Ministers will no doubt take this occasion to apprise their Congregations, of the Duty incumbent upon them, to provide in the first place, for their own poor Neighbours; they being in that Sense a Part of their Families, which they are bound to provide for, and that Charity ought to begin at home.

This is all a Work within our own Power, and in all Probability, will afford Support for our disabled Poor. Why then shou'd the Experiment meet with delay, especially since it is but a little Trouble, and small Expence which attends it.

If the Nobility, Gentry, and others, when they travel, or come to reside in *Dublin*, or other places for some time, will but take a Resolution to give Alms, only to such as are the badged Poor of the Places where they lodge or reside. This will be an additional Help to the support of such Poor.

It is likely there are among the aged Poor, some Men who are yet able to handle a Shovel; these may be fixed in little Huts, on the sides of the big Roads, and at proper Distances, but near to such places as the Roads are generally made bad, by the frequent Stoppage of the Water, for want of proper Passages being kept open to let it pass into Ditches, and thence throw the Banks into the declining Grounds. These poor Men ought to have Shovels given them that they may employ themselves as far as they are able in this Work, by which they will merit the Alms of Passengers, and well deserve both a Shovel, and some Support from the Occupice of the Land, joining such Ditches, whom the Law requires to have that Work constantly done, but frequent Rains closing those Passages, and the Fear or Negligence of the Overseers, to require the Law to be observed, has occasioned an Expence to the Countries of making Pavements, which might have been saved.

If these poor Men do this Work, the Occupiers of the Land refusing them a Shovel and a small Reward, the next Justice of the Peace may oblige the Overseers to cause those Persons to do the Work constantly, or employ others.

This Article, if put in practice through the Kingdom, may prove a Support to Numbers of aged Poor. And I doubt not, but weeding, and some other easy kind of Work, may employ aged poor Women, and some Children; and be a Help to their Support.

By the foregoing Methods (if put in execution) we may reasonably conclude, the incapable Parish-Poor will be supported, without any further or other Charge, than the charitable Assistance of the Inhabitants of their respective Parishes, and means aforesaid, besides the good Effect of such a Regulation, it will have the following Consequence.

quence. It will oblige all strolling and wandering Beggars, to hasten to their Homes in Expectation of being badged there, if qualified, or find a way to subsist; the Cheats and Vagabonds in disguise, will think it high time to alter their Course, to prevent being sent to Houses of Correction; strolling Women loaden with Children, some hir'd to beg with, some their own, most of which have either Husbands, or Fellows, to whom they resort to; but these are sculking, idle, drunken Fellows, such Women must quit their way of living, when they find the badged Poor only regarded.

So that it is very probable (I say) that at least a quarter Part of those who now appear in the Shape of Beggars will soon vanish, after the general badging takes effect.

And especially if a Resolution be taken to give Alms to none others in the Streets and Roads.

Notwithstanding the most notorious of the Cheats, Vagabonds, &c. will disappear: Yet there will remain Numbers, who have neither Places of Abode, or Friends to retire to, and that could not be taken into the Number of the Parish-Poor, and badged where they were examined and reside, and some of these probably are blind, lame, and distemper'd, yet most of them capable of doing some Work were they confined to it.

The Youth of both Sexes will also remain at large; such as their Parents are not able to maintain, and such as quitted their Parents, rather than be kept to Labour; there are numbers of these straggling about, running into evil Courses, sculking about Gentlemens Stables and Houses; and are privately supported by Servants, and some by Servants to whom they are related, and this by stealing from their Masters and Mistresses; others pretend to live by selling News-Papers, blacking of Shoes, and running often on pimping Errands from Taverns; tho' these kinds make a sorry Shift to get Bread; yet they are notoriously wicked, and ought to be confined to Work-houses.

But until such Houses are prepared and furnish'd (as hath been observ'd) there is no taking up of these kinds, but of Course, they must as yet be left to shift.

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We have had it long in our Power by good Laws in being, to have prevented the Increase of this kind of evil Youths, and been Gainers by it.

One would think that by the forgetfulness or backwardness shewn in putting many good Laws in effectual Execution, we were not in earnest when we press'd to have them.

There is an Act in being, obliging Husbandmen and Labourers to breed up their Children in their own way of Husbandry: The Design no doubt was to have an Increase and Succession of such Hands to do the Business of the Neighbourhood, that they might not be obliged to seek for them elsewhere, as well as to find an honest way of Livelihood for such Youth.

Had the Gentlemen who had the Power of this Act, obliged their Tenants and Neighbours to observe it; adding their own helping Hands to find such Children something to do, suited to their Age, if only to earn a bit of Bread and a little Milk towards their Support, till more able to work, and which perhaps their poor Parents were not able to give them: This Assistance had prevented numbers of Youth from wandering, and been a Check to the Pride of too many poor Parents in sending their Sons to Trades in Cities and Towns, instead of their being kept at home, and made useful Servants and Husbandmen in their Country. There are more Youth about Cities and Towns than Masters to take them; and more put Apprentices, than know how to set up or get Bread when out of their Times for want of Stock; and also for want of Trade sufficient for so many as do set up, Numbers of these kind of Apprentices have therefore fallen into evil Courses, and many to untimely Ends and often brought Poverty on their poor Parents.

There is a late excellent Act, which gives a Liberty to Persons to take such Youth, as Parents are not able to maintain to serve them as Apprentices until they come to 24 Years of Age, and prescribes a Method for their being bound, with a Penalty on such as run away, &c.

The Intention of this Act was to afford present Support to such Youth, train them up to become honest and useful

ful Servants, (very much wanted) as well as to prevent such falling into evil Courses: And by giving the Masters so long time to retain them; the Act no doubt intended thereby that they should be encouraged to use them well, and by their Service be fully re-imbursed all the Charge of their keeping, it being very probable they would (when grown up and well instructed) earn much more than it came to.

There is good reason to believe, that some of these likely Youths of both Sexes, so taken and well used, may become a greater Comfort to some Families than their own Children.

Besides this is to be consider'd as an Act of Charity, and as a Branch of a Poor-Bill for the Support of some of this Class of Beggars, or prevent their becoming so, and it is in our Power to put it in some Measure in Execution.

I hope both Nobility and Gentry, Farmers and Traders, both in the Country-Cities and Towns, will be induced to cast their Eyes round their Neighbourhoods, and take some of these helpless Youth into their Services and Protection; if none offer near hand, then to look further for the most likely for their purpose, that by this Means the present number of this Class of Poor may be lessened, and the fewer left in a straggling Condition until the Work-houses shall be ready; where all such as can then be found, may be put to serve as Apprentices till 24 Years old, and be instructed in the Flax and Hemp-dressing, and other Branches of that Trade, or some other.

Having (as I proposed) laid down Methods by which the Parish-Poor may be both regulated and supported, and by which Regulation we may hope Numbers of Cheats, Vagabonds, and sturdy Beggars in disguises, will be obliged to vanish, and take to another Course of Life; also encourage the providing for a part of our poor Youth of both Sexes to be taken as Apprentices, the which Methods are now in our Power to put into practice, and at a very little Expence, and no great Trouble; considering the charitable Work, the Benefit which immediately occurs is this, that we have acquitted ourselves of a great part of our Duty, and relieved ourselves from a great part of a Grievance, which daily advanced upon us.

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What remains of this Duty and good Work is this : To find out proper Methods for supporting and employing all sorts of Beggars that shall be found after we have provided for these Kinds, as before mentioned, (that is to say) all such as are not taken and badged as Parish-Poor, not being qualified, nor the Parishes in a Condition to support them, nor that have any certain Places of Abode to retire to, but still wander about. And the Remainder of the helpless Youth of both Sexes, whose Parents can't maintain them, or have wander'd from them.

These two Classes are those whom I propose to be supported, and employ'd in Work-houses. And the sooner such are provided, the sooner they may be taken up and employ'd, and when that is done, there will scarce be seen any Beggars in the Kingdom, publicly begging Alms, but what will be under a Badge or some Regulation. There is not a County in the Kingdom, but either has in it (or might have) the Linnen-Manufactury in some measure carrying on, unless it be their own Faults. For there is no County but may, if they please, find out proper and sufficient Ground, for sowing either Flax or Hemp, or both ; and there is no County but has in it numbers of idle Hands that might be employ'd in the Work of preparing and spinning Yarn.

Equal Encouragement has been given to every County that has apply'd, and was capable of performing Contracts, by the Trustees for promoting the Linnen-Manufactury, by which means, and the right Application of the Funds for that Service, several Linnen-Manufacturies have been set up, and the Trade greatly enlarged. Vast Quantities of Hemp and Flax raised by the foreign Seed distributed, and what they are now upon, *viz.* Contracting with Undertakers in most Counties to sow ten Acres or more, each with foreign Seed, to be given them *gratis*, they to continuethis sowing for three Years successively.

By which Undertakings vast Quantities of Flax and Hemp will be raised this very Season, consequently employ Numbers of Hands, in ordering and making it fit for Sale and Spinning.

On this fair Prospect of Employment for the Poor, I hope

hope every County will (as soon as they well can) erect a Work-house, wherein none are already built, and the Work-house be situated as near as may be to such Part of the County as is fitted for raising most Flax and Hemp, and intends to carry on the Linnen-Manufactury. Let these Houses go by the Names of the *Charity Work-houses*.

Where Work-houses are already built, and are in such order as to serve for the Purpose, that Charge will be saved.

Let a House of Correction (which need be but small) be built at a small Distance from each Work-house.

Because (as I am credibly informed) nothing has so much obstructed the Country Peoples sending their Children to learn to spin, or other Work, at the Work-house, or School, kept there, as its bearing the Name of a *Bridewell*, or House of Correction, where Offenders are committed. And since the Charity new Work-houses may not only serve to employ the Poor in, and instruct the Poor Youth taken in as Apprentices, but also instruct and employ the Country Peoples Children sent there to learn, it is worth while to place a House of Correction by itself.

Let there be separate Masters, the first for employing the able Poor and Youth, put Apprentices, together with a Spinning-School, and for instruction of neighbouring Children, giving out of Flax or Hemp to poor Women able to spin, and who are Badged, and have many poor Children, paying such for their Labour. The other for the Reception and Correction of Vagabonds and sturdy Beggars, with other idle Persons and Offenders; compelling such to beat Hemp and Flax, till discharged on their giving Security or Satisfaction to those employ'd for that purpose, to quit Begging, and alter their course of Life.

Sturdy Offenders in the Charity Work-House to be sent here and corrected, and kept to hard Labour till reformed, and then returned.

When the Houses are built, they must also be furnish'd with Necessaries for Lodging and Feeding for some time, as well as with Materials for working, it requiring some time to make the Hands capable to bear their own Charge, by their Work.

But

But there is no manner of doubt, but the Owners of the Flax and Hemp raised in the County, will readily supply the Masters of such Work-Houses with Flax and Hemp to be prepared fit for Sale, and Spinning, and pay them for the Work, as they can have the like done, or sell the Masters the Flax or Hemp rough at an easy rate, giving them time for Payment, until they have fitted it for Sale.

The Houses being prepared as aforesaid, then, and not sooner, are we in a Condition to take up the remaining two Classes of Poor not before provided for, as aforesaid.

It is of great importance to have the Masters of the Work-Houses, such as are well skill'd in the Linnen-Manufactory in all its parts, and Men of good Repute and Substance, if it can be. Proper Regulations for the good Government of these Houses will be necessary.

The Gentry of each County are the proper Persons to concert these Matters; and will, I doubt not, resolve in good earnest to do it, taking Turns to be Inspectors or Overseers of these Houses.

The Trustees for promoting the Linnen-Manufactory, are very proper Persons to be consulted; and if apply'd to, may advise how some good Masters may be found, and what Rules are needful to be observed, and I doubt not but will give their Assistance otherwise towards so good a Work.

These Charity Work-Houses, if once set on Foot, and under a regular Management, may very probably become worthy the Consideration of Persons charitably disposed, to endow them, for they are like to be a kind of perpetual Hospitals for Relief of the Poor.

If after all I have offer'd, the Counties will not think fit to proceed on these Methods, nor fall into some other as effectual, by reason of the apprehension of Expence and Trouble, (tho' it would be but small, and soon over I am perswaded) nor that some Assistance can be had from the Publick instead thereof, or some Means found out by better Heads than mine, to have the Work as effectually done, it must drop of course, and the Poor increase upon us, till at last we shall be brought under a Necessity of doing that

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at a vast Expence, which may now be compassed on easy Terms.

I believe most Gentlemen, who are Lovers of their Country will agree with me in this, That if a Sum of Twenty Thousand Pounds were spared out of the Surplussage of the Revenues arising over and above the needful Charge of the Establishment, apply'd to the Redress of this Grievance, that such Application would be of far greater Service to the Kingdom, than its being apply'd and expended out of it.

Certainly our Lord Lieutenant would not have recommended to Parliament the taking into Consideration the Condition of the Poor, and by the KING's Command, had his GRACE not been ready to give his Assent to what they should agree upon as needful to be done for Relief.

Yet it is most surprizing, to find some Gentlemen so fearful of a poor Bill, lest it should require the Assistance of a Supply to relieve our own Necessities; and yet so generous, as to part with that Supply to gratify others. If this Proposal of mine has the good Fortune to take Effect, or any ways be contributory to the setting forward the great and charitable Work; I shall, in proper Time, lay down Methods which, I am assured, will in great measure, put a stop to the Growth of a new Set of Beggars; for by preventing the Causes, the Effects must cease; such as putting a stop to the extravagant Drunkenness of the ordinary sort of People, Labourers, Journeymen of all kinds, Carmen and such like, who spend their daily Wages, and have not at the Week's end sufficient left to purchase a Loaf of Bread, to carry home to Wife and Children. Great part of this Evil is owing to their Employers, who either keep Ale-Houses themselves, or employ others to do it, and where they order Credit to be given their Workmen.

The City of *Bristol* found out this Mischief, and prevented its proceeding, by obliging Masters to pay, or allow Credit to the Workman, for no more than was sufficient for his daily Subsistence, and at the Week's end to pay the Wife the remainder.

Note,

Now, It will concern Cities and principal Towns, to fit up Work-Houses, and furnish them with Materials, for working with all Expedition; because, after all Parish-Poor are Badged, these will be the chief Places in which the strolling Vagabonds and such like, will crowd and take shelter, and whilst they can get any sort of Support, will not care to take another course: It will concern the Magistrates to confine these, or oblige them to retire to the Countries whence they came: The Gentlemen there will the sooner find themselves obliged, for their own Quiet, as well as out of Charity, to hasten their Work-Houses, or find some other as effectual Means to employ such, and all other sorts, which are not the badged Poor.

Great Complaints have been made of the Grievances occasioned by the marching Gangs of Women, Children and Youth, who sally out from their own Homes; set their Cabbins, Gardens, Cows, or Goats, for some Months, whilst they follow the Harvest-Labourers, some of whom are their Husbands, others pretended to be so; these are a Burthen where-ever they come, pilfering and stealing all they can privately lay hands on.

The Farmers cannot be without these Harvest-Labourers, who come from the remotest Parts of the Kingdom, to follow as the Harvest ripens; but certainly, had the Youth of each County, been kept at home, and bred up Labourers, and other such like Methods taken, the Hands of one County by this time might have assisted the next, and prevented in great measure this Evil.

There is reason to believe that among these Gangs, numbers of our present Vagabonds and sturdy Beggars, when obliged to retire from Cities and Towns, will shelter themselves, and increase that Grievance.

The Gentlemen of the Counties, whose Tenants and Estates suffer by this Mischief, will, I doubt not, for their own sakes, find out a Means to put a stop to it.

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